

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 130199

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT:POLADS DISCUSSION OF YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP CHANGES

REF: USNATO 5004

1. AS REQUESTED REFTEL, FOLLOWING IS DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS
OF RECENT YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP CHANGES.

2. ON MAY 15, THE NINE-MEMBER STATE PRESIDENCY "ELECTED"
FADIL HODZA, AN ETHNIC ALBANIAN FROM THE AUTONOMOUS
PROVINCE OF KOSOVO, TO A ONE-YEAR TERM AS ITS VICE-
PRESIDENT. (TITO IS PRESIDENT FOR LIFE.) AS VICE-PRESIDENT,
HODZA WILL CARRY OUT VARIOUS PROTOCOLARY FUNCTIONS FOR
TITO, IN AN EFFORT TO CONSERVE THE LATTER'S ENERGIES. SHOULD
TITO DIE OR BECOME INCAPACITATED DURING HODZA'S TENURE,
THE LATTER WILL SERVE AS PRESIDENT UNTIL HE IS SUCCEEDED BY
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ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE STATE PRESIDENCY, ACCORDING TO A
PRE-ARRANGED ANNUAL ROTATION. HODZA(68) HAS SPENT MOST OF
HIS CAREER AMONG THE ONE-MILLION MEMBERS OF THE ALBANIAN
MINORITY.

THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY ON MAY 16 RE-ELECTED VESELIN
DJURANOVIC AS PREMIER AND TWO YUGOSLAV ARMY GENERALS RETAIN-

ED THEIR KEY PORTFOLIOS: NIKOLA LJUBICIC AS SECRETARY FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND FRANJO HERLJEVIC AS SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (SECURITY AND POLICE).

JOSIP VRHOVEC, A 52-YEAR-OLD CROAT WITH A BACKGROUND IN JOURNALISM AND IDEOLOGY, WAS APPOINTED FOREIGN SECRETARY, SUCCEEDING THE SERB MILOS MINIC. VRHOVEC FOUGHT WITH THE WORLD WAR II PARTISANS, GRADUATED FROM THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AT ZAGREB UNIVERSITY, AND TAUGHT AT THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES. FROM 1952-1969, HE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH VJESNIK, CROATIA'S LEADING DAILY, SERVING AS ITS CORRESPONDENT IN LONDON AND WASHINGTON AND LATER AS ITS EDITOR. HE ROSE TO PROMINENCE IN THE CROATIAN PARTY AFTER TITO PURGED THE "NATIONALIST" LEADERSHIP THERE IN 1971-1972. AT THE MAY 1974 YUGOSLAV PARTY CONGRESS, VRHOVEC WAS APPOINTED TO THE 48-MEMBER PARTY PRESIDUM, THE PARTY'S TOP POLICY-MAKING BODY; LATER THAT YEAR, HE WAS APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY COMMISSION DEALING WITH IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS. HE ACCOMPANIED TITO ON HIS STATE VISIT TO WASHINGTON THIS MARCH.

THE APPOINTMENTS NOW UNDERWAY ARE PART OF THE PERIODIC ROTATION OF PARTY AND STATE OFFICIALS THAT HAS BEEN DEvised TO EASE THE TRANSITION IN THE POST-TITO PERIOD. THEY ARE ROUTINE BUT WOULD ASSUME SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD TITO DIE OR BECOME INCAPACITATED
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WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR OR SO. THE PARTY CONGRESS WILL BE HELD JUNE 20-23, AND MANY THINK IT WILL BE THE LAST THE 86-YEAR-OLD TITO WILL ATTEND. VANCE

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